

**WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 21, 2014**

A Special Meeting of the Board of the Washington County Commission was called to order by Chairman James J. Eardley at 6:00 p.m. on October 21, 2014, in the Commission Chambers, Washington County Administration Building, St. George, Utah. Those in attendance were Chairman James J. Eardley, Commissioner Alan Gardner, Commissioner Victor Iverson, Administrator Dean J. Cox, Deputy County Attorney Eric Clarke, and Deputy County Clerk Christine S. Hall.

Chairman Eardley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**AGENDA**

**PUBLIC HEARING: TO RECEIVE INPUT FROM THE PUBLIC WITH RESPECT TO (I) THE LEVYING OF THE RAP TAX AND (II) ANY POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT THAT THE FACILITIES FINANCED IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITH THE PROCEEDS OF THE RAP TAX MAY HAVE ON THE PRIVATE SECTOR. ALL MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE INVITED TO ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE**

Chairman Eardley said that this is the second of two public hearings on the subject of the Recreation, Arts, and Parks (RAP) tax and referred to Deputy County Attorney Eric Clarke to provide some background on the process by which this issue is brought before the voters.

Mr. Clarke explained that several years ago the Utah State Legislature developed a mechanism for cities and counties to impose a one-tenth of one percent (1/10 of 1%) sales tax on non-food items. Under the statute, those funds can be dedicated for parks, recreation, botanical organizations, and zoological organizations (in Salt Lake County it is referred to as a "ZAP tax"). Earlier this year, the Washington County Commission made a decision to place this issue on the ballot in November but did not include zoos or botanical organizations in that group. If this tax were to be approved this year, therefore, it would be designated only for recreation, arts, and parks.

The process is similar to that of a bond election: public hearings are held regarding placing the opinion question on the ballot and if more than half of the cast votes are in favor of the RAP tax, then the County Commission can impose that tax. In that case, the tax is in place for ten (10) years, at which time another decision is made by the voters to reinstate it. If less than half the votes are in favor, then the issue is dead and cannot be resurrected before two (2) years. No decision is final until the election is formally canvassed at the November 18, 2014, Commission meeting. The earliest the tax would be imposed is the beginning of the second quarter of 2015.

Commissioner Iverson reminded the audience that the State statute allows either for a countywide imposition of the RAP tax (recommended by the Legislature) or a city-by-city imposition. In Washington County, the municipalities and the County have already coordinated an interlocal agreement as to how those funds are distributed; the cities will receive the vast majority of the funds, according to a formula based on population and point of sale.

Administrator Dean Cox added that Washington County is host to a great number of tourists who enjoy the scenery, climate, and recreational activities. For every three (3) cents generated under a tax of this type, one of those pennies is contributed by out-of-town visitors, thus lessening the financial burden on the County's citizens by one-third (1/3).

Chairman Eardley opened the Public Hearing and invited comments from those in attendance.

Nine (9) individuals addressed the Commission:

- Kyle Paisley, Regional Chair for Utah Youth Soccer Organization, said that the revenue from the RAP tax would assist greatly in the promotion of this sport
- Tom Henry, a longtime resident, stated that he was against the tax, citing a statistic that the tax will cost residents \$25 million in ten years
- Doug Alder said that most urban centers in the state participate in some type of RAP tax and that in Washington County, such a tax would benefit our trails, parks, symphonies, art galleries, and other activities, which are currently operating largely on donations and volunteers
- Lonni Clarke, a local artist, said she had reservations about the steady radicalization of the arts
- William Ence had concerns about who will administer the funds
- Cimarron Chacon cited a great need for increasing and improving cycling trails
- Ken Schoonover, a Sun River resident, enthusiastically supported the RAP tax and the potential benefits of increased pickleball courts in the County
- Jeff Fisher of Tuacahn said that Tuacahn alone brings in \$75 million to the County's economy annually and said that sixty-six percent (66%) of the state participates in some form of RAP tax
- Kim Konikow, Chair of the Washington County Arts Council, encouraged support for the RAP tax which will benefit all citizens on the county

Chairman Eardley asked whether anyone else wished to comment, and no one came forward. He therefore closed the Public Hearing.

***Request a Closed Session***

None.

There being nothing further to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

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CHRISTINE S. HALL  
DEPUTY CLERK

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JAMES J. EARDLEY  
CHAIRMAN